Right Honorable the Lords and Commons Assembled in PARLIAMENT.

RIGHT HONORABLE,

COming to *London* in *August* last, I met with a Proclamation, wherein His Majesty complained of the Injuries he received in his Customs, and not without just cause; the which I being sensible of, did (as in duty bound) put forth a printed Sheet directed to his Majesty, shewing the reasons wherefore the Customs were not so well answered and paid as they ought to be; and that these evils might be remedied, I sent one of the Sheets unto the Commissioners for the Customs, the which had they put in practice, it had saved his Majesty many thousands, for want of which he hath deeply suffered; the Work is so necessary, that it impossible without it to improve the Customs, Although in the late times there were many rs in the Customs which proved very destructive to the Receit, by which (I am confident) e third of it was then lost, which the Bill your Honours have past, falls short to prevent, it ng rather to recover what may be lost, then to prevent the loosing of it; yet the Customs e then better improved, and the Receit far greater than now; and yet there was not in seven years before, such a year for the improvement of the Customs as the last year was; so, the Receit in reason should have been greater than formerly; and without doubt it uld, had it been as well managed: For their power (I conceive) is now no less than theirs rmerly, neither do these want any material Laws the others had. But give me leave (by comring the management of these affairs formerly, and at present) to shew your Honors from whence the ruine of the Customs chiefly proceeds.

1. *Formerly all Officers were in bonds, bound in good Sums, with good Sureties, for the faithful discharging of their duty, which did greatly deter them from the breach of that Trust imposed on them.*

Now they are without Bonds, Security, or Oath given for the faithful discharge of their ty, which liberty doth greatly encourage them to act their will and pleasure towards the venue's ruine, for their own benefit.

2. *Formerly all Officers were allowed a competency, which caused them to prize and value their Employments, and it did encourage them to all faithfulness.*

Now their Salleries are reduced so low, they cannot live upon it; for he which formerly 100. *l. per an.* is now reduced to 40. *l.* and he which formerly had 40. *l. per an.* is now redu- to 25. *l.* So that first, They give them an opportunity, in leaving them at liberty without . Secondly, If they will not make use of this opportunity, they do enforce them to it r necessity; so that if the saying be true, *That Necessity and Opportunity will make a* f, it is impossible the Officers should be honest.

3. *Formerly they were very careful to enquire into the Parts and Abilities of those persons they employed, and when approved, they were very tender of parting with them, except dis-affected) not granting that to accuse, should be sufficient to condemn; they knowing, that he which is most faithful, able active, gives the most offence; therefore if to Accuse should be sufficient to Condemn, who would scape, but those which they had most reason to vindicate. This assurance they then had of their Places made their Lives comfortable, and did greatly encourage them to all faithfulness and diligence.*

Now Places are bestowed by favour, without regard had to the persons Parts and Abilities the Place or no; insomuch that it is a question which way his Majesty most suffers, when ntenance or Kin- [illegible] an Officer be never so able and faithful, their Employ- uncertain, that let a slanderous Accusation be brought against them, if ck't by the Commissioners Relations or Favourites, of which the Customs swarm places; for these but to accuse, it is sufficient to condemn, without permitting the liberty to make his defence, and for what reasons, is best known to themselves. Let ation be brought against any whom they favour, they shall be supported against all , although to the prejudice of the Kingdom, endangering the peace thereof; so the fourth condition they are in, by reason of the uncertain enjoyment of their Places, them to provide for the future, and *make Hey while the Sun shines.*

4. *All Masters of Ships had one* per cent *allowed for Portage, for which the Tydesmen, who had the whole charge of the Receit aboard, and could not stir without prejudice to it, could have commanded things necessary and convenient, as this Dyet, or the like, without any Engagement to lye upon him for what he received.*

Now the Masters have allowed them for their Portage, but a fourth part of what they forwhich is so inconsiderable, and the trouble many times great in getting of it, that so that this puts an inconveniency upon the Tydesman, that he is as comply with the Master, to do him some favour for what he receives; so oners save at the Spigget, whilst the Tydesman lets it out at the Bung. ne hath been the chief cause of the great confusion and loss that is, and : Therefore I humbly conceive, that if your Honours had gone first the Officers, and have let the Bill alone as yet, it would have to his Majesty; for your Honours intending this Work, and de- greater spoile of his Majesty's Revenue, then otherwise nding that inquiry will be made into their Parts which there was never more need) and that their the worst, without doubt provides for the future, ng hereby, I doubt not but will sufficiently appear the Receit of the last Quarter, with the same Quarter in the out this work the Bill at the best can be but of little or no use; for, the executing of it, they who must execute the Laws but the Offiliberty, and shall through discouragement and necessities put upcorrupt, these without doubt instead of executing the Laws to preenforce't to lay hold of all opportunities, and break every

only persons that are by these practices discouraged and necessithe sole trust of the Income of his Majesty's Revenue lieth, d-Waiters and Tydesmen; these are the onely Conduits and ceit in from the Ports mouth into the Custom-House door: For el entreth any Port, but a Tydesman boards her; under whose lieth night & day until delivered; and what he hath faithfully predelivered by the Land-Waiter, according to the true quantity Customs are paid. So that in these two hands lieth the whole Officers in the Custom-house, from the highest to the lowest, are not of half the concernment of these: For let but the Coast be secured to convey the Receit into the Ports under these men's charge, all the Improvement that can be made, these may do: The Commissioners, nor any other (as these may be managed) can prejudice the Receit one penny, but these may give an account thereof; and on the contrary, these can enrich themselves to the great prejudice of the Receit, and not be prevented; and yet all the opportunities these have, may be taken away in two things, which the Bill will no ways prevent. These are the Ground-work and Foundation whereupon your Honours must build the improvement of the Customs; therefore that your Foundation may be good, and that your Building may stand sure, cherish these two Persons, giving them all due encouragement, preventing their necessities, and to have an assurance of the continuance of their Places, and not to lie at the Will and Pleasure of the Commissioners, to be turned out of their Employments, which will prove very destructive to the Receit; for the persons that are most likely to suffer hereby, are those which are most faithful and best deserving; and my reasons are these: First, He which is most faithful, able and active, gives the most offence both to Merchant and Officers; so that he shall not want an ill report in preventiug the Merchant's fraudulent practices; and from the Officers, in clouding them with his extraordinary Services, then for to grant, That to accuse should be sufficient to condemn, which hath been too much practised by them, is the onely way to part from their best Officers; and not to hear complaints, would encourage the Officers to fraudulent practices; and to hear all complaints legally, both what the Accuser, and the Accused had to say, they had no need of other Work. Besides, the Commissioners have not a few of their Relations and Friends in the Custom-House, who have the same infirmities that others have; if so, what Officers dare complaine of the Frauds they shall commit, when their Fathers, Uncles or Friends shal be judge in the case, and the Officer that informs, at their will and pleasure to be turned out; so that Friends and Favourites may prejudice the Receit without controul, it being dangerous for others to complain thereof. To remedy this Evil, and to take the Officers from under this slavery, that their lives may be comfortable, if faithful, and if corrupt, that they may be severely punished; This I propose,

That after they are bound in such Summs as your Honors shall think fitting for the faithful discharge of their Trust, such Bonds to be forfeited upon the breach of their Trust; and whoever shall inform and sue the same, the one moyety to be paid to the King, the other to him that shall sue for and recover the same, as also the Imployment if he be capable thereof; All such informations first to be given into the Commissioners, with the Informers name, and place of abode; and least the Officer, knowing of the Informer should stop his proceedings by bribing him, or otherwise, that then the information be given to the Officer, who shall no further be imployed, until he hath made his innocencie appear by prosecuting the Informer, recovering from him such sum or sums of money, if able, or suffer such punishment as your Honors shall provide in an Act to this purpose; the one moyety of such sums to be paid unto the King, the other to the Officer, upon this to be restored his place; this will stop many idle clamors; in this the Commissioners favourites shall suffer as well as others; this will be done without partiality; this will be a great means to preserve men faithful, and faithful men in their places, and not fearful to tell the best of their faults that shall go about to prejudice his Majesties Revenue, which they cannot do while they are lyable to be disposed of at the Commissioners will and pleasures.

Besides, to leave the Officers at the will and pleasure of the Commissioners, may be the giving away of that vast improvement of the Customs that may be made thereof unto those whom it was never intended for; and were the Bill your Honors have past, so perfect as it might have been, yet it may be compared to a Lock, which is of little or no use without the Key; for this is that which (with the help of the hand) puts the Bolt backward or forward, as occasion shall serve. The Law is the Lock, the Officers the Key, the Commissioners the Hand, which by encouragements, and well regulating, the Officers turn them to the improvement of the Customs, or (by discouragements given) to the ruine of it; that there may be a vast Improvement made of the Customs, every man (almost) is sensible of; insomuch that there is (without doubt) many that would farm it; and if the Commissioners are this way minded, (which I shall not question) what an opportunity they have to gain their ends, is easily judged, they having the Key of the work in their hands, to turn which way they please. So that it will be at their choice, whether the Customs shall be improved or no, until they have (as it were) inforc't it into their own hands.

This is the third sheet I have presented to your Honors to this purpose; for the good of which, I have waited here in Town these six Months, at a great distance from my Family and Occasions, at no small trouble and charge; insomuch that I have been made ridiculous for my well-wishes and trouble I have hitherto undergone to promote His Majesties Interest, in which I know I cannot but have created to my self certain Enemies, and uncertain Friends; therefore being a stranger here in Town, and alone in this Work, having none to assist me herein, without your Honors favourable assistance, I shall be made uncapable to be instrumental in this Work; and if your Honors did rightly understand how difficult it is to be rightly informed how these affairs might be improved to the best advantage for His Majesty, there being but few that understand it, and of those that do, few but are benefited by the spoyl of it; I conceive then, that those whose experience hath taught them knowledge in these Affairs, not onely for the Customs, as Officers, but also against it in the service of the *Merchant*, such should not be found to ruine their own Interest in waiting to promote His *Majesty's*, nay, I may say, your Honors, and the Publick's; for as your Honors have setled this upon His Majesty, as part of his Revenue, if you take not great care in the securing of it for him, but that it be imbezeled, it is your Honours must supply his necessities; and so the loss prove your Honors and the Publicks, which is so considerable, that were I in a capacity to farm it, and His Majesty willing to let it, I would give a hundred thousand pounds *per an.* more than hath been made of it, and would not doubt to get as much more by it. For the prevention of this loss His *Majesty* at present suffers, I have several Proposals to offer, not inserted in the Bil your Honors have pass, and for want of Friends or Confidence to importune them, I make it my humble request, That some one or other of your Honors would be pleased to move for me, that I might improve my Talent not onely for His *Majesty*, but your Honours, and the publick good, for which he shall ever pray for your Honors, that is

Your Honors most humble, faithful and obedient Servant,
RICHARD BOWER.